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MOVING FROM EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In today's shifting paradigm of people management, it's a real challenge for companies to manage the employee relations and engagement aspect. HR experts are of the view that if an employee is not driven by motivation, he will not be able to give his best to the organization. If satisfied employees are instilled with strong sense of motivation towards excellence in performance and an equally strong commitment towards welfare of the employers, he rises to level of an 'engaged employee', who is emotionally involved in the business processes and develop 'strong zeal' to achieve business goals. This paper aims at developing an understanding of the concept of employee engagement; differentiating it from employee satisfaction and determining the various workplace attributes that affect employee engagement in the increasing order of their significance. Further a model has been developed to engage employees in the organization by linking Maslow's need hierarchy model of motivation with the Mercer's employee engagement model.

KEYWORDS

employee engagement, engaged employees, employee motivation, employee satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Today every business is facing challenges like increasing competition from current competitors and new market entrants, cost pressures, innovations in products and technology, emerging brands, globalization, erratic attrition rates and mobile workforce, changing consumer buying patterns and service expectations, shareholder value and city expectations. In the light of these challenges a good strategy for employee engagement can do wonders for an organization.

Over the last two decades, employer's needs and interests have moved from creating conditions and programs that result in employees who are merely "satisfied" with pay, benefits and working conditions, to employees who are "committed" to the organization and not considering a move, to those who are genuinely "engaged" in the work and mission of the organization. (Sanchez, 2008)

In the present scenario it has become quite difficult for multinational organizations to increase the levels of employee engagement in their organizations. The most important reason for this is the heterogeneity in the employee population. So, it is quite an easy task to talk about the potential benefits of employee engagement but practically, increasing the levels of employee engagement among employees is a challenging job. These days' organizations are making all the possible efforts to win the hearts and minds of people in order to achieve highest levels of performance and productivity; still they find it very difficult to crack the code of employee engagement.

Organizations like 3M, Microsoft, Google, Motorola, Airbus, Apple computers, and a host of many Japanese organizations popularized this concept over a period of time.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop an understanding about the concept of employee engagement.
2. To have an overview about the various benefits of having engaged employees in an organization.
3. To determine the difference between employee engagement and employee satisfaction.
4. To determine various attributes that affect employee engagement in an organization.
5. To establish a link between Maslow's need hierarchy model and Mercer's model of employee engagement.

DEFINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

It is defined as employees' willingness and ability to contribute to company success. Another way to think about engagement is the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work, in the form of extra time, brainpower and energy. (Towers Perrin Talent Report, 2003)

The concept of employee engagement can be explained as the sum total of behavioural aspects reflected by people in an organizational setup. It can further be demonstrated by employees in the following ways:

- By having a strong belief in the mission, vision, and values of the organization.
- By having an internal desire to bring about improvements in the organizational processes.
- By having an involvement in the company's business and strategies.
- By having a sense of respect and support for others in the organization.
- By having an inner desire to learn something new and put it to organizational use.

It is making employees to work with not only their minds and body but also with "hearts". Engaged employees and organizations will "go the extra mile" for each other because they see mutual benefits of investing in their relationship. (Treaty, 2007)

Another way of explaining the concept of employee engagement is by considering it as a strategic partnership between the employees and their organization. In this partnership both the employees as well as the organization have mutual interdependence. The employees work towards achieving the business objectives and improving the overall productivity. On the other hand, the onus of providing a conducive environment and a good work culture so that aspirations of employees are also achieved is of the organization.

The concept of employee engagement is so vast that it covers almost all the aspects that come under the scope of human resource management. Even though the concept of employee engagement is basically derived from some of the facets of human resource management like job satisfaction, employee commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, employee involvement etc.; there is still much more to it.

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement helps in developing a committed workforce for an organization. This committed workforce helps in developing the business for an organization by means of creating an emotional connect with the customers and generating a loyal client base.

These committed employees further help in creating a positive effect on other employees of the organization and as a result a kind of synergistic environment is generated. Because of this the workplace becomes highly productive and ethical.

Engaged employees also tend to stay with the organization for a longer period of time thereby reducing the rate of employee turnover and creating an overall positive environment.

Some of the other benefits of engaged employees have been discussed below:

- Engaged employees tend to be better performers and are highly motivated.
- They tend to increase loyalty in the organization and contribute significantly to the success of the organization.
- Engaged employees also help in increasing the productivity and profitability of an organization.
- They also tend to be better team players and provide whole hearted support to their colleagues.
- They also tend to form an emotional bond with the organization and hence have a remarkably good attitude towards customers and clients.
- They help in improving the overall culture and provide better customer satisfaction.
- Engaged employees are more synchronized with the goals and strategies of the company and hence are highly committed.
- They act as goodwill ambassadors of the company and help in increased business growth.
- They act as perfect employees and also motivate others in the organization to contribute wholeheartedly towards the success of the company.
- Engaged employees also contribute towards reduction in the levels of absenteeism and employee turnover and increased levels of employee satisfaction.
- They also help in reducing supervision costs, and other such cost which ultimately leads to reduction in cost of goods sold.
- Engaged employees also act as a source of competitive advantage for the organization and provide sustainability to the organization.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Having satisfied employees is no longer sufficient these days. So far organizations have been putting lot of time on conducting employee satisfaction surveys just to know the happiness quotient of employees with the company. But their level of happiness and satisfaction does not necessarily reflect their level of engagement in the organization.

Employee satisfaction merely is an indicator of workplace morale. Even though determining this is important for an organization but it does not indicate productivity of employees. This is where employee engagement plays a significant role. From the above discussions it is quite clear that employee engagement has a direct link with the productivity of the company.

The concept of employee satisfaction just measures how satisfied are the employees with the organizational policies, rules and regulations, supervision, administration, communication channels, work, etc.

On the other hand, employee engagement is much more than this. It tends to measure the extent to which employees form an emotional connect with the organization by means of aligning themselves with the vision, mission, goals, policies, values, philosophy and practices of the organization.

An employee is “satisfied” due to what he /she “gets” from the organization, while an employee is said to be “engaged” when he focuses on “giving” to the organization. (Daryani, 2008)

A “satisfied employee” is likely to “stay” longer. On the other hand, an “engaged employee” is likely to “contribute” longer.

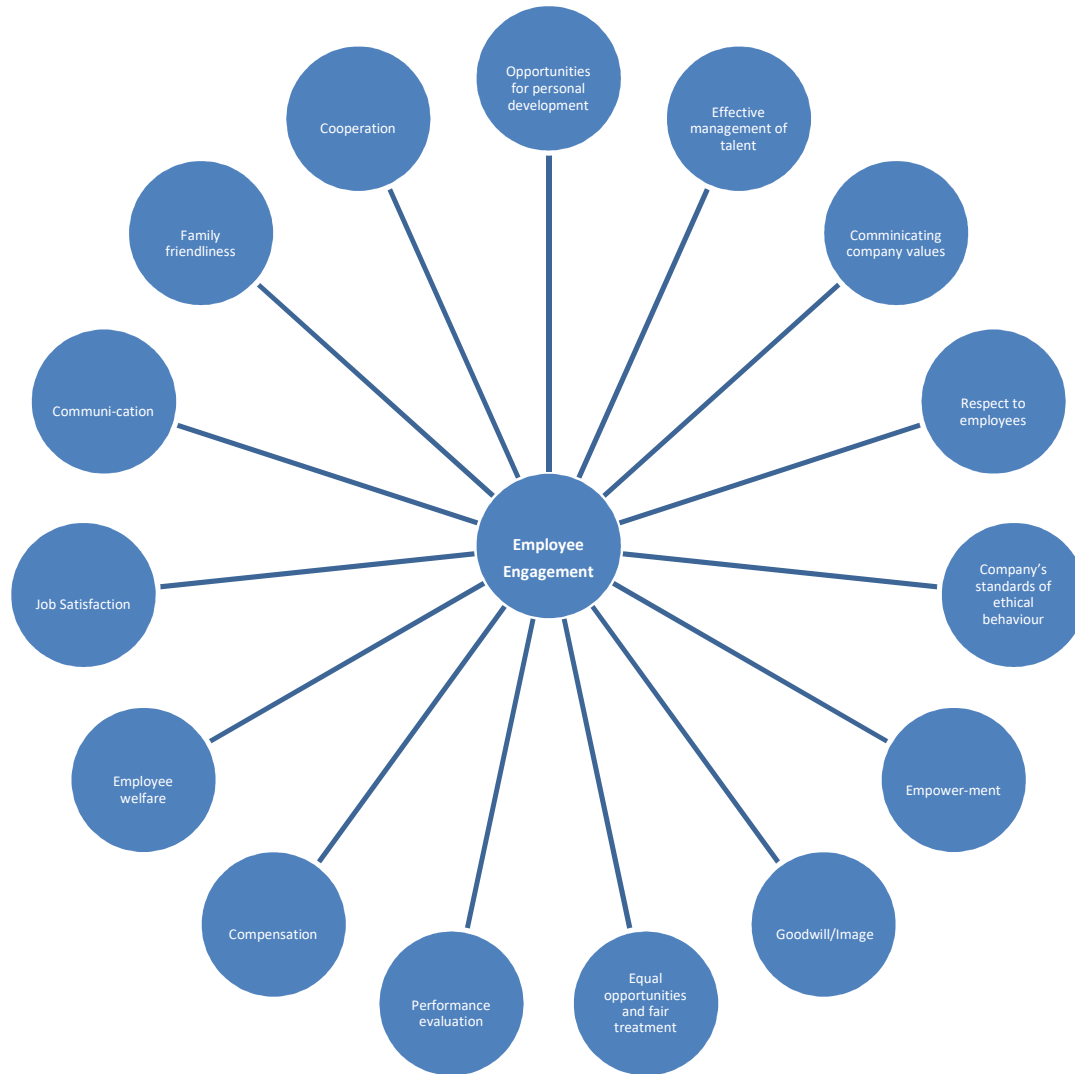
Employee engagement gives importance to all the three aspects: physical, cognitive and emotional, whereas in employee satisfaction importance has been given to cognitive side only. (Vazirani, 2007)

TABLE 1

Employee Satisfaction	Employee Engagement
1. It is a degree to which employees are satisfied with their employer, policies, the work environment, supervision and leadership, the actual work as well as other factors.	1. It includes the extent to which the employees identify with the organizational goals, mission, philosophy, value, policies, and practices.
2. Employee focuses on getting from the organization.	2. Employee focuses on giving to the organization.
3. The employee is likely to “ stay ” longer.	3. The employee is likely to “ contribute ” longer.
4. Gives importance to cognitive aspect only.	4. Gives importance to all the three aspects: physical, cognitive and emotional.
5. It is an indication of employee morale.	5. It is an indicator of higher productivity.

WORKPLACE ATTRIBUTES FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Fig: 1



1. **Opportunities for personal development** - It relates to providing diverse training opportunities, leadership programs, workshops, designing career paths, etc.
2. **Effective management of talent** - The process covers all key aspects of an employee's "life cycle:" like selection, development, succession and performance management. It is about identifying a person's natural skills, talent, personality and traits, while offering him or her job
3. **Communicating company values** – It is very important for the employees to know about the value system and philosophy of the organization so that they can relate to it mentally as well as emotionally. The employees should know what the organization wants to achieve and how they can contribute towards the success of the organization.
4. **Respect to employees** – Every employee wants to be treated respectfully in the organization. Companies who respect the dignity of employees tend to have a greater loyalty from their workforce.
5. **Company's standards of ethical behavior** – Employee engagement levels tend to be higher in those workplaces that follow high standards of business ethics and principles.
6. **Empowerment** -Employee empowerment entails identifying how much responsibility and authority an individual can effectively handle without becoming over-burdened or distressed. Empowerment in an organization results in engaged employees.
7. **Goodwill/Image** – The Company's goodwill or image is basically how it is being perceived by everyone in the society. Employee engagement and in turn how much they are willing to endorse the products or services of the company greatly depends on the perception that customers have about the quality of those goods and services.
8. **Equal opportunities and fair treatment** to all the employees irrespective of gender, age, designation or level is another aspect that ensures employee engagement.
9. **Performance evaluation** – Employee engagement also depends on how the employees' performance is being evaluated in the company. Organizations that use unbiased and transparent techniques for employee evaluation tend to have high levels of engagement.
10. **Employee compensation** – in order to increase the levels of employee engagement the organizations should have a well maintained employee compensation system in place. The employees should be motivated using a combination of monetary as well as non-monetary benefits.
11. **Employee welfare** – It is quite evident that employees will not feel engaged if an organization does not take care of the health, safety and welfare needs of the employees. Hence, every organization should take certain measures in this direction also.
12. **Employee satisfaction** – Organizations can't ignore the importance of employee satisfaction. Any company that wants to have an engaged workforce should make sure that there is a proper match between the jobs provided to the employees and their career goals
13. **Communication** – In order to ensure employee engagement, the organizations should have open channels of communication. Employees should know what is going on in the organization and why they are doing a particular task so that they get to know the relevance of their jobs.

14. **Work life balance** – If an organization wants to have an engaged workforce it needs to provide a healthy work life balance to its employees because the family life and personal life of a person are connected to each other.
15. **Cooperation** - Employees will be engaged if teamwork is a virtue that the company values. If the leadership and employees focus on team goals instead of individual goals, it goes in a long way to engage employees.

Employee engagement also depends on the hierarchy level to which an employee belongs. Senior executives are more engaged than any other groups.

Moreover, the type of industry to which an employee belongs also determines the level of engagement

According to various studies, the most important driver of 'Employee Engagement' is believed to be the correlation between the employee's job and organizational strategy, as well as an understanding as to how important the job is to the success of an organization. (Chandra, 2008)

By having a better understanding of the various drivers of engagement and the relative importance of each of these factors on the level of employee engagement, it becomes possible for the organizations to allocate resources in the best possible manner and improve overall productivity of the employees and the organization as a whole.

Organizations nurture engagement by proactively leveraging three sources of influence:

- Employees.
- Leaders.
- Organizational systems and strategies.

FIG. 2



Organizations hoping to instill engagement must take into account of employees' passion, commitment, and identification with the organization.

MODELS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1. ISR's 3-D MODEL

According to Towers Perrin ISR's (International Survey Research -2006) 3-D Model of Employee engagement, engagement is a three-dimensional concept comprising of following three components:

The Cognitive or "Think" component - what do employees think about their company? Is there an intellectual fit between each employee and the organization? Do employees believe in the organizations goals and objectives and support the values for which the organization stands?

It basically relates to employees' logical evaluation of a company's goals and values.

The Affective (Emotional) or "Feel" component - what do employees feel about their company? Is there an emotional bond between employees and the organization which makes them proud to be a part of the organization? Would each employee recommend the organization as an employer?

It taps into whether employees have a sense of belonging and pride in the company.

The Behavioural or "Act" component - how do employees act in relation to their company? Here are two aspects to how employees act in relation to their company. One is whether employees exert the maximum effort in their work. Do they go the extra mile?

The other is whether each employee intends to stay with the organization through successes and setbacks.

So it relates to retention and willingness to "go the extra mile".

Each of these dimensions of engagement must be present, to some degree, to achieve high levels of employee engagement and fully realize the benefits of employee engagement for the company.

2. MERCER'S FOUR STAGE MODEL

On the basis of research Mercer has identified a **four stage model of employee engagement**. These four stages represent increasing levels of engagement within the organization and correspond to particular psychological states namely – **Satisfied, Motivated, Committed, and Advocate stage.** (Sanchez, 2008)

Satisfied employees enjoy doing their jobs and are not dissatisfied with the terms and conditions of employment. Generally, they are content to work alone, reliably, without requiring a great deal of management oversight. At the same time, they are not necessarily willing team players and tend not to go "above and beyond" in their efforts. Optimizing the working relationship of satisfied employees requires adequate work tools, resources and equipment.

Motivated employees occupy the next stage on the employee engagement continuum. In addition to sharing the attributes of satisfied employees, motivated workers contribute energetically and are highly focused individual contributors to the enterprise. Mainly, though, they are striving to achieve individual goals more so than team or organizational goals. Motivated employees respond best when meaningful work is delegated to them; fair performance goals are established; job expectations, priorities and feedback are clearly communicated, obstacles to optimal performance are removed; and skill development is provided.

Committed employees have thoroughly internalized the values and behaviors represented by the earlier stages of the engagement model but have also forged a strong identification with the organization. They are loyal to the company and optimistic about its future. They are also openly ambitious and believe the organization will enable their best performance.

Employees who have reached the **Advocate stage** have a vested interest in the organization's success. They freely contribute discretionary effort – a willingness to go the extra distance in executing projects and their regular duties. They are motivated to perform to the highest standards and apply creative energy to their work and the work of their teams. They proactively seek opportunities to serve the mission of the organization

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO TO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be linked to Mercer's employee engagement model

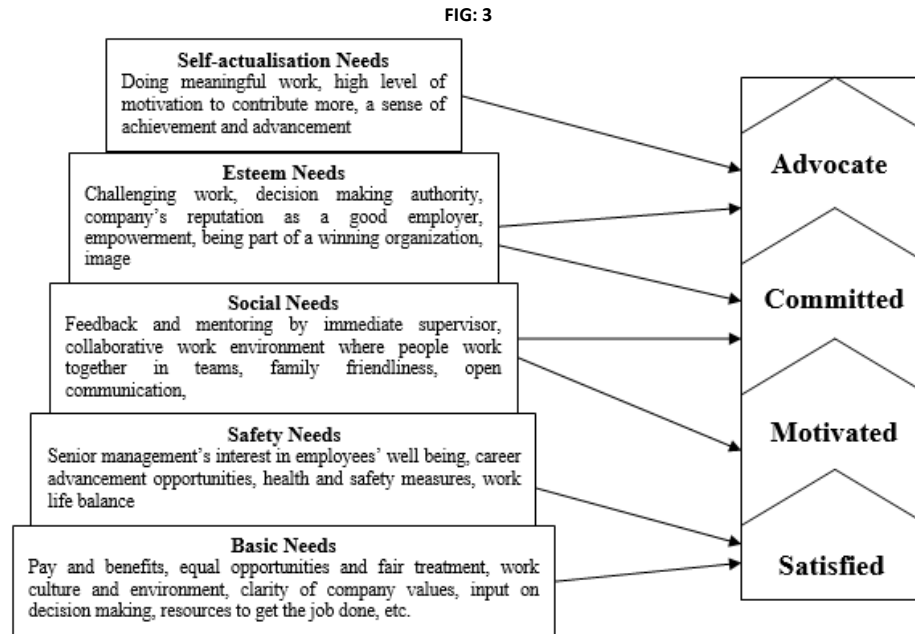


Figure 3 depicts the following:

- Fulfillment of basic and safety needs leads to satisfaction of employees.
- If employees are provided with social needs, it leads to a motivated workforce.
- Social and Esteem needs provided together results in committed employees.
- Advocate stage of employees is achieved when esteem and self-actualization needs are met.

In order to satisfy the various needs of employees the following organizational factors are helpful:

- **Basic Needs** – pay and benefits, equal opportunities and fair treatment, work culture and environment, clarity of company values, input on decision making, resources to get the job done, etc.
- **Safety Needs** – senior management's interest in employees' wellbeing, career advancement opportunities, and health and safety measures, work life balance.
- **Social Needs** – feedback and mentoring by immediate supervisor, collaborative work environment where people work together in teams, family friendliness, open communication, cooperation.
- **Esteem Needs** – challenging work, decision making authority, company's reputation as a good employer, empowerment, being part of a winning organization, image, etc.
- **Self-actualization Needs** – doing meaningful work, high level of motivation to contribute more, a sense of achievement and advancement.

For the purpose of developing the framework in Fig. 3 the various needs in the Maslow's need hierarchy have been drawn from the workplace attributes required for employee engagement as in Fig. 1.

CONCLUSION

Building engagement is a process that never ends. It is not about making people happy, or even paying them more money. Rather it rests on the foundation of meaningfully and emotionally enriching their work experience.

According to a Chinese proverb:

**"If you are planning for a week, plant corn.
If you are planning for months, plant trees.
If you are planning for years, plant men"**

In today's scenario if organizations want to be successful then; maintaining high levels of focused performance is not just important but critical to the existence of all the companies. In order to achieve this, sincere efforts must be taken by organizations to increase the level of employee engagement.

It has been observed that pay and benefits are more important in attracting and retaining people, but they play a less important role in engaging people in their work. This is because people need to be appreciated and valued for their contribution to the organization.

What every employee wants are a combination of monetary as well as non-monetary elements that together create an environment of learning, advancement, achievement, recognition and the support of management.

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